

Lavenham Parish Council report by Robert Lindsay County Cllr 14th May 2026

County Election and the new Cosford

I am pleased and relieved to have been re-elected as your County Councillor for the remaining two years of the county's existence.

The Cosford division has become larger. I had been representing 18 villages, but four villages to the East were taken out of it, while seven other villages, including Boxford, Little Waldingfield and Alpheton, have been added, making a total of 21

From the northernmost hamlet, Cross Green in Cockfield, to the southernmost, Hagmore Green, Boxford, the new division is about 15 miles long and 10 miles wide at its widest part.

I think I'd better say from the outset that given the large number of parish councils, attendance at every one of them will be impossible, especially given that many meetings occur at the same time. I aim to focus on the new villages to start with so that I can get to know the Parish Councillors

Lavenham Parish Council knows that I can always be emailed or messaged and will always respond as best I can.

The new County Council

The elections cut the Conservative Councillor numbers down from 55 to just nine with Reform winning 41 out of 70 seats, enough to form an administration on their own.

Greens increased seats from nine to 13 – making us the official opposition - while LibDem and Labour seat numbers were roughly halved.

Reform	41
Green	13
Conservative	9
LD	2
Labour	2
Independent	2

At this stage it is not clear what Reform's policies are on County Council matters.

There are press reports that the Chair of Ipswich Reform Party has banned its new Councillors in Ipswich from talking to the press. At the same time the former and would-be leader of Suffolk's Reform group, Christopher Hudson, has said that all the newly elected Reform Councillors need to be put in an "academy" for six months to train them up.

We have our first full Council meeting next Thursday when a leader (from Reform) for the whole Council will be voted in, and cabinet members appointed. There are rumoured to be at least two contenders for leader.

Green Councillors will be discussing how to form our opposition group to best effect in the days before that.

I and my fellow Green Councillors will do our best to hold the Reform administration to account for its two year term.

Question mark over unitaries

As you know, the Government decided recently to opt for creating three new unitary councils across Suffolk in May 2028, to replace the existing district and county councils. I felt this was the best outcome of the two options available, as councils are better able to serve their residents if they are nearer to them.

The current leader of Suffolk's Reform group had indicated before the elections that he does not support this decision and has suggested they may seek a judicial review.

I may be wrong but my feeling is that the Government have followed due process in making their decision – whether or not one likes the outcome. I would prefer it if the new county administration is prepared to work with the district councils towards preparing for three unitaries as so that they are as effective as possible for residents when they start in two years' time. Residents will not be best served by more uncertainty.

Two more elections in next two years - 2027, 2028

If the Government does stick to its plan, in a year's time, in May 2027, there will be elections of "shadow" unitary Councillors – in our area for the new unitary of West Suffolk. Those elected will not actually be representing residents until the unitaries are legally created with full staff in May 2028.

Alongside this, the Government is creating the office of a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor, elected by all the voters in the two counties. That election is scheduled to happen in May 2028 and the Mayor will take office straight away.